

FACT SHEET
U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
STATE TRADE AND EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAM
Program Announcement No. OIT-STEP-2016-01

- The STEP Program is a Federal-state partnership initiative, intended to increase the number of small businesses that export and the value of exports by the small business sector.
- The Program was authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (SBJA), funded at \$30 million per year for the first two years, \$8 million for the third year, \$17.4 million for the fourth year, and \$18 million in the fifth year. Awards earned during a competitive merit-based review process can be made to the 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands.
- Services provided by states to 'eligible small business concerns' under the Program include support for participation in foreign trade missions and market sales trips, subscription to services provided by the Department of Commerce, design of international marketing products and campaigns, export trade show exhibits, export training, and other efforts aligned with Program goals.
- Under the Program, in most cases the Federal government provides 75% of the total project funding, and states provide 25%. However, for the states currently high in value of exports, the Federal government provides 65% of total project funding, while states provide 35%.
- The first round of competitive cooperative agreements was awarded in September 2011, for performance during the period October 2011 – September 2012. In the first round, SBA made 51 awards totaling \$29 million. The average value of awards was \$568,000.
- The second round of competitive STEP cooperative agreements was awarded in September 2012, for performance during the period October 2012 – September 2013. In the second round, SBA made 52 awards totaling \$30 million. The average value of awards was \$577,000.
- The third round of competitive STEP cooperative agreements was awarded in September 2014, for performance during the period October 2014 – September 2015. In the third round, SBA made 24 awards totaling \$8 million. The average value of awards was \$333,000.
- The fourth round of competitive STEP cooperative agreements was awarded in September 2015, for performance during the period October 2015 – September 2016. In the fourth round, SBA made 40 awards totaling \$17.4 million. The average value of awards was \$435,000.
- The fifth round of competitive STEP cooperative agreements will be awarded in September 2016, for performance during the period October 2016 – September 2017. Individual state project award

amounts will vary based on each state's proposed project plan and budget. In the fifth round, SBA will make up to 40 awards, totaling \$18 million.

- For the fifth round of awards, SBA will continue to emphasize collaborative partnerships and the return on investment (ROI) of the proposed activities which support proposed milestone goals. The ROI is the measure of export sales derived from the activity divided by the Federal award amount expended on the activity.
- The STEP Program Announcement for the fifth round of awards is posted at www.Grants.gov. The application period will be February 3, 2016 through March 17, 2016. Awards will be issued by September 30, 2016.